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ABSTRACT

A study described first-grade teachers' beliefs and practices about reading instruction. Drawing from interview and observational data, 16 teachers from 4 districts in south-central Texas were placed on a continuum from skills-based to literature-based in relationship to their use of the basal. Only 2 teachers were found to rely solely on the basal, while 3 teachers enhanced the basal with literature, and 4 teachers used only literature in the reading instruction. Six teachers enhanced their basal use with additional skills and one teacher relied on skills only in her reading instruction. This diversity of teaching beliefs and practices was corroborated by questionnaire data from a larger sample of teachers. Next, a framework developed by M. Belenky and others was used to categorize teachers' ways of knowing. Findings showed one teacher to be a "silent knower," six were "received knowers," one was a "subjective knower," seven were "procedural knowers," and one was a "connected knower." Results challenge P. Shannon's hypothesis that basals "deskill" teachers while supporting L. Sosniak and S. Stodolsky's view that teachers are more autonomous in their use of textbook materials. (Contains 36 references and 3 figures of data. An appendix presents a summary of the "ways of knowing" categories.) (Author/RS)

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NRRC National Reading Research Center

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About the National Reading Research Center

The National Reading Research Center (NRRC) is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education to conduct research on reading and reading instruction. The NRRC is operated by a consortium of the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland College Park in collaboration with researchers at several institutions nationwide.

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Abstract. *This study describes first-grade teachers' beliefs and practices about reading instruction. Drawing from interview and observational data, 16 teachers from four districts were placed on a continuum from skills-based to literature-based in relationship to their use of the basal. Only 2 teachers were found to rely solely on the basal, while 3 teachers enhanced the basal with literature, and 4 teachers used only literature in their reading instruction. Six teachers enhanced their basal use with additional skills and 1 teacher relied on skills only in her reading instruction. This diversity of teaching beliefs and practices was corroborated by questionnaire data from a larger sample of teachers. Next, a framework developed by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) was used to categorize teachers' ways of knowing. The findings showed 1 teacher to be a "silent knower," 6 were "received knowers," 1 was a "subjective knower," 7 were "procedural knowers," and 1 was a "connected knower." Results challenge Shannon's (1987) hypothesis that basals "deskill" teachers while supporting Sosniak and Stodolsky's (1993) view that teachers are more autonomous in their use of textbook materials.*

Basal reading programs, despite their reported widespread use in schools (Wepner & Feeley, 1993), have sustained repeated attacks over the past several decades in both the professional and popular press. Criticisms of the particular "approach" they represent (e.g., Chall, 1967; Flesch, 1955, 1981) have given way in recent years to criticism focused on the technical control that basal programs may exert on teachers. Under this view, basal reading

programs are seen as *deskilling* teachers, robbing them of the opportunity and responsibility to make significant instructional decisions (e.g., Shannon 1983, 1987, 1989). Basal reading programs deny the legitimacy of teacher knowledge that grows out of personal experience or other forms of *knowing* that do not reflect a technical ideology.

Baumann (1992) has challenged this characterization of basal programs and their effect on teachers as too simplistic. The reality of classroom reading instruction is much more complicated than is represented in a "teacher following a recipe" metaphor. Baumann reframes the Goodman, Shannon, Freeman, and Murphy (1988) question "Why do teachers. . .find themselves in a position of powerlessness during reading instruction?" (p. iv) to ask the question: "Do teachers. . . find themselves in a position of powerlessness because of basal readers?" (p. 397).

We are engaged in a three-year, longitudinal study of first-grade reading instruction that is designed, in part, to shed some light on the issues surrounding basals and the teaching of reading. The broad focus for this project is on factors that influence changes in teacher thinking, teaching practices, and student learning in beginning reading instruction.

Background

Four areas of research serve as important background for our current project: (1) the evolution and development of basal reading programs; (2) the popularity and use of basal programs; (3) the influence of basal programs on teacher thinking, decision-making and instructional actions; and (4) teacher beliefs about basals. Research in each of these areas will be examined briefly in this section.

Basal reading programs have been described by Wepner and Feeley (1993) as ". . .a sequential, grade-specific, all-inclusive set of instructional materials for teaching reading in grades kindergarten through eight." Many authorities trace the roots of the modern basal to *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers* published in 1836 (Bohning, 1986; Leu & Kinzer, 1991). McGuffey is credited with publishing the first series with a specific pupil reader designed for each grade level. He is also credited with being the first author to control the rate of introduction of new vocabulary with each story. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, basal programs became increasingly complex in terms of features and components such as adding workbooks, teacher guides, and tests (Smith, 1965). By the early 1950s, most of the basal programs looked very much alike in terms of their content (i.e., narrative text portraying life in the "typical" family expanding to ever-broadening circles of the community) and in pedagogy (i.e., a heavy reliance on vocabulary control and sight-word teaching). Chall (1967) describes this period as a time of consensus on "how to teach beginning reading" (p. 13).

The consensus regarding content and pedagogy was challenged in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and basals changed in response to criticism. The emphasis in pedagogy on sight-word teaching and severe vocabulary control gave way to an increased attention to isolated skills instruction with skills mastery standards that emphasized phonics in combination with

sight-word teaching (Popp, 1975). The homogeneity of the American life experience, replete with stereotypes and blatant omissions, was replaced with literature that attempted to reflect diversity of lifestyles and roles (Baumann, 1992). Most of the selections, at the early levels of programs, were still contrived "in-house" by the publishers to accommodate issues of vocabulary control. By the mid-1980s, another period of consensus had been achieved—a skills-based instructional design became the stated philosophy of the most popular basal programs. The selections presented in the pupil books were devised (or selected/adapted) to provide practice in the skills targeted in specific lessons. Additionally, text forms other than narrative began to find their way into the basal reader systems (Flood & Lapp, 1987). Components such as workbooks, skills sheets, and assessment procedures served to complement this instructional design. Basal manuals during this period became quite explicit in terms of "guiding" teachers on how to manage pupils (e.g., through ability grouping) and directly teach the skills that had been targeted (Woodward, 1985).

In the middle 1980s, the basal consensus was once again challenged. On the one hand, the increased emphasis on skills did not seem to have any measurable, positive effect on student achievement (e.g., the 1984 and 1986 NAEP scores for 9-year-olds indicate lack of significant progress in addressing student needs). Additionally, a new movement in literacy instruction was beginning to gain momentum. The "literature-based" movement grew out of concerns over the heavy emphasis on skills in early reading, and out of the potential for the use of authentic, high-quality children's literature as the basis for teaching reading (Cullinan, 1987). Advocates for holistic, language-based strategies for nurturing young learners through emergent into conventional forms of reading began to assume a stronger voice in both professional and political circles (California State Department of Education, 1987). While the primary rhetoric during this period focused on abandoning the basals in favor of the use of tradebooks in the classroom, basal publishers apparently "got the message" and attempted to respond. The literature-based basals published in the early 1990s represent a radical departure from the programs of the earlier period (Hoffman et al., 1994). Most of the literature included in these literature-based basals is drawn from published children's literature. Vocabulary control in these new programs has all but disappeared even at the earliest levels in favor of an emphasis on text that is highly predictable using rhythm, rhyme, and patterns. The "literature experience" is emphasized more than the focus on isolated skills. The traditional components of basals (e.g., pupil texts, teacher guides, practice books, assessments) are still in evidence, but the focus and philosophy have shifted significantly.

Estimating the popularity of basal reading programs in instruction is a challenging endeavor. Sales records for series like McGuffey's readers suggest that basal reading programs were immensely popular into the early 1900s (Bohning, 1986). The decline in sales of the McGuffey readers in the 1920s should not be interpreted to mean that the basal approach was falling in popularity. Indeed, the opposite

seemed to be the case. The increasing number of different series being published during the 1920s and 1930s suggests that the market for basal programs was very strong (Smith, 1965). Several large evaluation studies of reading instruction in major school districts across the country (e.g., Gray, 1933) suggest that basals were a mainstay of most reading programs. Two important large-scale survey/descriptive studies document the popularity of basals in the early 1960s. Chall's (1967) study of beginning reading instruction indicated wide use of basals as did Austin and Morrison's (1963) report on reading instruction in American schools, "The First R." Survey studies since this time consistently estimate that 80–90% of the children in this nation learn to read in the context of basal programs (see Farr, Tulley, & Powell, 1987).

Estimates of popularity place only indirect evidence on the degree and form of control that basals exert on the instruction offered in classrooms. In their interviews with eight elementary teachers, Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas (1993) found that the teachers tended to rely on the basals even when they believed basal use was not the best way to teach students. Clearly the materials reaching the hands of pupils are part of the learning experience, but to what degree are the teachers relying on the teacher guides to guide instruction? Durkin (1984) conducted an investigation into the influence of suggestions in the basal teachers' guides on instruction. She observed first-, third-, and fifth-grade teachers and recorded each activity observed in terms of (a) followed recommendation, (b) followed recommendation in altered form, or (c) not in manual. She found that teachers tended to ignore suggestions for pre-reading activities, but demonstrated heavy reliance on the guide for post-reading activities. Omission of activities suggested in the manuals was explained by teachers in terms of time constraints and lack of importance. In a study focused on the influence of the basal manual on teacher instruction in reading groups, Shake and Allington (1985) examined the patterns of questioning. They found that 79% of the questions asked were not in the manual. Barr and Sadow (1989) studied the use of two different basal reading programs. Their data suggest that the degree of reliance on suggestions from the manual tended to vary from one teacher to another, but may be consistent for the individual teacher. For example, some teachers tended to rely heavily on the manual as the source of most of their questioning, while other teachers did not appear to be guided at all in their questioning by the manual.

Perhaps the most cited study of teacher beliefs about basals is Shannon's (1983) investigation of teachers in one school district. Shannon posed questions in a survey of teachers that focused on the degree to which the basal was influential in the way they thought about and enacted instruction. He interpreted the results of this survey as confirming the hypothesis that "most teachers thought the materials could teach reading" (p. 80), although this question was never posed directly.

Baumann and Heubach (in press) reported findings of a national survey of 1,000 elemen-

tary teachers regarding their use and opinions about basal programs. Designed, in part, as a replication of the Shannon study, the questionnaire posed questions that focused on the perceived control exerted by basals over these teachers. The findings from this survey stand in direct opposition to those reported by Shannon. They argue that there is little evidence in their data to support a deskilling hypothesis. It should be noted that the Baumann and Heubach pool of respondents was randomly selected from active members of the International Reading Association; this group may not be representative of most first-grade teachers.

The research literature in these areas suggests that many questions remain regarding the relationship of basals to the teaching of reading in elementary classrooms. Our research is designed to explore this important relationship further. In this report, we examine the data collected during the first year of our research project. Our research goals for this first year focused on two areas. First, we were interested in characterizing the diversity (or lack thereof) in first-grade reading instruction. We were particularly interested in examining the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices and the pedagogy represented in basal reading programs. Second, we were interested in examining the epistemological orientation of teachers toward reading instruction. In what ways do teachers assume different "ways of knowing" (Eisner, 1985), and how are these ways of *knowing* played out in the classroom in terms of acceptance, adherence, or discounting of various instructional models?

Research Methods

Our examination of these research questions drew on two data sets. The first, and most important, involved the examination of case studies of 16 first-grade teachers. The second data set consisted of the responses of a larger sample of teachers, drawn from the same districts, on a survey questionnaire.

Participants

Teachers involved in this study were drawn from four districts spread geographically over a 300 square-mile area of south-central Texas. The districts were selected because they represented a variety of teaching contexts (see Figure 1). District #1 is a large, urban district of 65 elementary schools that serves a diverse community (both ethnically and economically). District #2 is a rural district that serves a low-average to average income community. The district has two elementary schools, and is soon to open a third. District #3 is a very large, urban district serving an economically disadvantaged community. The vast majority of students in its 174 elementary schools are of minority background and on free/reduced lunch. Finally, District #4 is a large, suburban district that serves a community in transition. Up to just a few years ago, this district served a primarily European-American student population drawn from middle to upper-middle income homes. Now the community served is much more diverse both ethnically and economically. There are over 37 elementary schools in this district.

For the case-study sample, two schools from each of the four districts were identified

District Number and Description	1	2	3	4
	Urban, Large, Ethnically and Economically Diverse 65 Elementary Schools	Rural, Low-Average Income, Anglo and Hispanic 2 Elementary Schools	Urban, Very Large, Minority Population, Low Income 174 Elementary Schools	Large, Suburban, In Transition Economically and Ethnically 37+ Elementary Schools
Teachers* *(By pseudonym, years of teaching experience, and ethnicity)	Joy, 28–A Pam, 7–A Connie, 5–A Marilyn, 14–A	Danielle, 1–A Nona, 6–H Sharon, 12–A Diane, 2–A	Marge, 3–A Mary, 11–A Pat, 7–AA Penny, 7–AA	Candace, 10–A Renee, 17–A June, 25–A Sarah, 25–A

Key

A = Anglo
AA = African American
H = Hispanic

Figure 1. District Summary and Teacher Assignment

by district officials. Our only stipulation regarding school selection for the research project was that the schools had minority representation in the student population served. The co-directors of the research project met with the first-grade teachers in each of the eight schools to explain the project and to invite participation. We described our investigation as descriptive in nature and focused on the questions of how teachers teach and what students learn in first-grade reading programs. We explained that due to resource limitations, we could only include two teachers from each school site. Two teachers volunteered from each school, giving us a total of 16 teachers for the case analysis. The teachers in our case-study sample ranged from one first-year teacher to a teacher with 28-years' teaching experience; the average in this sample was around 8-years' teaching experience. Of our 16 teachers, 13 were European-American, 2 were African-American, and 1 was Mexican-American.

The opportunity for teachers to participate in the survey study differed from one district to another as a function of district policies governing research. Three of the districts described earlier (#1, #3 and #4) were included in this sample. District #2 was not included because

we were already working directly with close to half of the total number of first-grade teachers in this district.

District #1. District officials provided us with the names and addresses of a randomly selected sample of 100 first-grade teachers in the district (one third of the total first-grade teaching population). We sent a survey questionnaire to each of these teachers directly. We enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of the questionnaire. A total of 46 teachers responded to the survey.

District #3. The central office for the district provided the research team with a list of all of the elementary schools in the district and the number of first-grade teachers in each of these schools. We randomly selected one third of the schools from this list and wrote directly to the principals enlisting their cooperation in the survey study. We asked the principals to distribute the questionnaires to their first-grade teachers. We enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of the completed questionnaires. Packets were sent to a total of 58 schools and were returned from 32 schools with a total of 90 teachers responding.

District #4. The curriculum specialist for reading prepared and distributed packets of questionnaires to the first-grade teachers in the district. These packets were sent to all of the 37 schools in the district with sufficient copies of the questionnaires for all of the teachers in the district. The teachers sent the completed packets back to the central administration offices. A total of 133 first-grade teachers responded.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The research team consisted of the two co-directors of the project and six graduate research assistants. Each member of the team worked with two of the case-study teachers. The development of the case studies drew on classroom observations and interviews. Each teacher was interviewed at least three times during the year (early winter, early spring, and late spring). Each teacher was observed a minimum of three times during the year teaching reading (following approximately the same schedule as the interviews). Several additional "mini-observations" were conducted on days when we visited school sites to conduct student assessments.[1] The interviews were structured to focus on teacher background, teacher beliefs, and teaching practices. Considerable attention was placed on documenting changes in the instructional program and sources of influence or attributions for these changes. Observations were designed to document teaching practices including grouping, materials use, skills lessons, and guided reading procedures. All interviews and observations were tape-recorded. Field notes were taken during the observations, and interviews were transcribed after each site visit. Data analysis began following each observation and interview, as researchers (individually) reviewed sources of information to identify recurring patterns (Bogdan & Bilen, 1982). Subsequen

[1]We randomly selected six students from each of the participating classrooms for intensive interviews and assessments. The findings will be reported separately.

interviews and observations were adapted to focus on emerging themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Case studies were constructed around four major areas of concern: (1) context and its relationship to instruction (e.g., school setting, district and school policies); (2) teacher background (with a particular focus of perceived sources of influence); (3) instructional practices (with a focus on materials and procedures); and (4) teacher beliefs about reading, including program goals, perceptions of program strengths/weaknesses, and attitudes toward students. Data and tentative interpretations were presented and discussed during weekly meetings of the research team. Case summaries were constructed for each of the 16 teachers included in the study. As a final stage in the analysis, the 16 cases were reviewed by the research team to identify patterns/themes across the entire sample.

The questionnaire (27 items/four pages in length) sent out to the broader sample of first-grade teachers in these districts elicited background information on the teacher (e.g., years' teaching experience at the first-grade level, academic degrees, student population served) and responses to a series of questions that explored teaching beliefs and practices. Most of the items were presented in a closed-response format (e.g., "Which of the following statements is most like your view on. . .?"). The items on the questionnaire were similar in focus to the items on the structured interviews of the case-study teachers (e.g., basal use, grouping). In constructing the items for the questionnaire, we drew heavily on the actual statements elicited from our case teachers during the interviews. We wanted to insure that the language on the survey reflected the language of teachers, not an academic view of teaching. All of the questionnaires were distributed in the late spring. The case-study teachers also completed the same questionnaire as part of the final interview for the first year of the project.

Results

Our discussion of the findings is organized around the two major research purposes: (1) characterizing the diversity of first-grade reading instruction; and (2) describing the epistemological orientation of first-grade teachers, with specific reference to their views on teaching reading. We will present the findings from both the case-study teachers and the survey teachers together to highlight the ways in which the data converge on the focus questions.

Diversity of Teaching Beliefs and Practices

Tremendous diversity existed in our sample of case-study teachers regarding philosophy, approaches, practices, and attitudes about reading and learning to read. The focus in this report will be on the common themes and points of difference identified across the 16 case-study teachers. We have identified three common themes: (1) the case-study teachers expressed strong, positive feelings about themselves as teachers; (2) school effects were apparent; and (3) little significant program modification occurred. First, the case-study teachers expressed strong, positive feelings about themselves as teachers and the quality of their instructional programs. There were only

two exceptions to this view. A second-year teacher working in District #1 expressed frustration with her own knowledge base and experience in dealing with the demands of the classroom. The first-year teacher in District #4 expressed similar concerns.

Second, school effects were apparent. We found greater diversity between schools than within a school. Teachers in the same school tended to express similar views and use similar terms in describing beliefs and practices. In six of the seven target schools, there was substantial co-planning of teaching and collaboration in determining the curriculum for the year. Context appears to exert a strong influence on beliefs and practices. Third, none of our case-study teachers reported significant program modifications from the previous year. Many reported that they were doing some fine-tuning and experimenting with various kinds of *additions* to the program, but these were regarded as enhancements not as new directions.

The survey responses suggest that the patterns found in the set of case-study teachers are reflective of the larger sample of first-grade teachers. For example, survey teachers were presented with the statement: "I am very comfortable with my current reading program. It works well for me." The teachers were asked to respond using a 5-point semantic differential scale ranging from a "1" (not like me at all) to a "5" (very much like me). The mean response for District #1 was 4.4 (SD = .84), for District #2 was 4.6 (SD = .7), and for District #3 was 4.4 (SD = .83). First-grade teachers in the broader sample, in general, appear to be very comfortable with their current practices. This corroborates the findings related to the first theme associated with our case-study teachers. Corroboration of the second theme from our case-study teachers appeared in survey responses to the statement: "I am very much like the other first-grade teachers in my school in terms of how I teach and how I think about instruction." The teachers in District #1 responded with an average score of 3.2 (SD = 1.1), in District #2 with an average score of 3.0 (SD = 1.3), and in District #3 with an average score of 3.5 (SD = 1.1). The average responses to this item clustered between the response category labeled "somewhat like me" and "very much like me." Finally, corroboration for the third theme from our case-study teachers is found in the survey-teachers' reaction to the statement: "I did not make any major changes in my reading program this year." The average responses were for District #1: M = 3.0 (SD = 1.3), for District #2: M = 2.7 (SD = 1.5), and for District #3: M = 2.7 (SD = 1.2). Again, the average responses clustered between the response category labeled "somewhat like me" and "very much like me."

In our attempt to explore points of similarity and difference across the 16 case-study teachers, we also examined the ways in which these teachers were relating to the basal program in their classroom. In all four districts, there was a single-adopted basal reading program that had been in use since the last state-adoption cycle (1986). In our interviews with the curriculum coordinators, we discovered that there were no rigid requirements for implementation or even use of the adopted basal; however, the materials

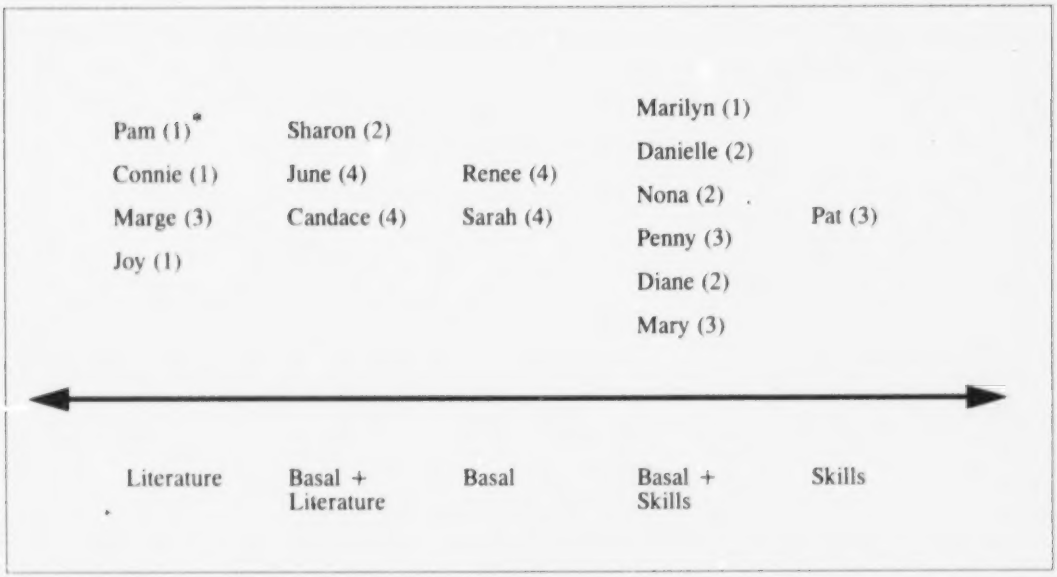

Figure 2. Materials Use Continuum for 16 Case-Study Teachers

were available in all districts. According to the supervisors' reports, there was very little in the way of active monitoring of basal use in any of the districts with which we worked. In fact, we observed considerable variation in the ways in which the case-study teachers related to the basal in their reading programs.

For the purposes of reporting these data, we have constructed a continuum reflecting basal use (see Figure 2). At the center point of the continuum, we locate a group of our case-study teachers who described themselves (almost literally) as "basal" people (Sarah and Renee). The two teachers positioned at the center point of the continuum spoke about their reading programs almost entirely in terms of the basal and its components. They relied on ability grouping as a means to focus on individual needs. They regarded their program as solid and well-rounded. During our classroom observations, we found these two teachers to be the ones most likely to have a teacher's manual close at hand as they interacted with reading groups. Literature experiences from trade books were offered in these classrooms, but they functioned more as a reward (e.g., storytime, free-reading) or as an extension (for the "accelerated learner") than as a critical component toward student success.

On the right side of the continuum (moving away from the center), we locate teachers who in varying degrees supplemented the basal

program with additional skills instruction above and beyond what is offered in the basal. In the cases of teachers Penny (3), Nona (2), Danielle (2), Diane (2), Mary (3), and Marilyn (1), we found individuals who relied on the basal materials to some extent. Penny, Mary, and Marilyn relied on the basal manual and support materials, but they supplemented with worksheets that provided additional practice in the area of phonics. Diane, Nona, and Danielle did not use their teachers' manuals to a significant degree to guide their teaching, but they made extensive use of the basal readers. Their main supplement to instruction was in the area of sight-word practice. They had developed "build-up readers" (Guszak, 1992) that consisted of short stories with frequent repetitions of sight vocabulary. Students practiced independently and in pairs on a daily basis in preparation for the reading of stories from the basal. Pat was the most extreme teacher in our sample in terms of supplementing the basal program with skills instruction. Pat began the year with an extensive period of drill with letter names and letter sounds work (using materials she had gathered through personal initiative). Even when the basal program was initiated, this teacher continued to supplement it with a heavy emphasis on phonics.

On the left side of the continuum (again, moving away from the center), we found teachers who in varying degrees incorporated the reading of trade books as a key component in their instructional programs. Candace (4) and June (4) used the basal as a safety net for the students in their program. They offered their students many experiences in trade literature along side their work in the basal. Sharon (2), in contrast, guided her students through all of the levels of the basal as quickly as possible. She then moved them into a literature-based approach with no attention at all to the basal. These teachers enjoyed teaching from literature, but were not confident that all of the skills could be taught without basal support. Covering the basal provided an element of security for them.

Pam (1), Connie (1), Joy (1), and Marge (3) did not use the basal readers or any other basal components in any significant way in their classrooms. Two teachers (Pam and Connie) threw out the basals several years ago after experiencing frustration and failure. Two (Marge and Joy) never taught with a basal at all. All four teachers relied almost exclusively on trade literature for instruction. They used big books, shared reading, and organized instruction around themes or genres (e.g., homes, fairy tales). Most of the instruction was offered to the whole class, but often groups were formed (mixed in ability) for certain kinds of "mini-lesson" work. To a large degree, these teachers integrated reading and writing instruction into a language arts block. To a lesser but still significant degree, they integrated reading and writing instruction across the entire curriculum. These teachers tended to be enthusiastic about their programs, recognizing themselves as outside the "norm" of first-grade teaching practices. For support and information they turned to workshops, the professional literature, and networks of other teachers working in the same direction.

Again, the results of the survey offer corroboration for the diversity observed in the

case-study teachers. Survey teachers were asked to respond to a series of items in which they were to place a check before the statement that "most closely represents your beliefs and practices." In an item focused on basal reading programs, the teachers were to choose from:

1. __ I rely on basals a great deal in my classroom. I regard it as the foundation for my reading program.

2. __ I don't use the basals at all in my classroom. I rely on literature (trade books) only for instruction.

3. __ I use basals in my classroom, but I supplement a great deal with work in children's literature. I don't feel that the basals provide enough contact with good literature early on for my students.

4. __ I use the pupil readers from the basal in my classroom reading program, but I rely very little on the manual for guidance.

5. __ Other: _____

Across the three districts, survey teachers (N = 269) responded in the following pattern: 12% selected response choice number 1 indicating a total reliance on the basal; 11% selected response choice number 2 indicating that they did not use the basal at all; 55% selected response choice number 3 indicating that they used the basal but supplemented a great deal with literature; 10% selected response choice number 4 indicating that they used the basal readers but not the manuals; and the remaining 10% of the respondents wrote in a description of their use (or non-use) of the basal under response choice number 5.

On a similar item, the survey teachers were asked about the degree to which they followed the basal program as guidance for their skills teaching. Only 11% of the respondents indicated that they followed the basal plan for attending to skills. The majority (59%) indicated that they believed skills should be taught in the context of reading good literature. "I decide which skill I am going to teach based on a consideration of how what we are reading lends itself to certain skills. I also consider the needs of the students." A significant number of teachers (19%) checked the following item with respect to skills instruction: "I teach the skills from the basal, but I don't think there is enough attention to them. I supplement with additional skills practice sheets I have acquired over time."

The findings associated with two other survey response items were also noteworthy for the way in which they challenge notions of traditional basal reading instruction. With respect to vocabulary control, teachers were asked to respond on a semantic differential to the statement: "It is important that the books students read in first grade have carefully controlled vocabulary." The average response for teachers in District #1 was 2.8 (SD = 1.3), for District #2 was 2.1 (SD = 1.3), and for District #3 was 2.4 (SD = 1.2). This response average is most closely associated with the response label on the semantic differential of "not at all like me." With respect to grouping

practices, the teachers were asked to check the description that most closely describes their practices:

1. __ I think it is important to group my students by ability for instruction. In this way, I can challenge each student at his/her level.

2. __ I like to group my students for instruction, but I like the groups to be mixed in ability. I sometimes teach whole-class lessons as well.

3. __ I don't group my students often for instruction. I teach skills and almost all of my other lessons in reading to my entire class. I find I can reach more of my students this way.

4. __ I have all of my students working individually in reading. I don't teach small-group or whole-class lessons. I like to have one-on-one contact. I also can get more accurate placement in materials in an individualized setting.

5. __ Other: _____

Across the three districts, survey teachers responded in the following pattern: 27% selected response choice number 1 indicating a traditional homogeneous grouping-by-ability pattern; 32% selected response choice number 2 indicating that they relied on mixed-ability grouping patterns; 24% selected response choice number 3 indicating a preference for whole-class instruction; 2% selected response choice number 4 indicating a totally "individualized" approach; and the remaining 15% of the respondents wrote in a description of their approach to grouping under response choice number 5.

These patterns of response to the survey suggest the same diversity of beliefs and practices evident in our case-study teachers. While we have no direct evidence that the actual teaching practices in the classrooms in the survey sample reflect the teacher statements, the congruence between the interview responses and our classroom observations of the case-study teachers lead us to infer a likely correspondence.

Ways of Knowing

As we observed the case-study teachers across various settings, listened to them interact with students, discussed programs and changes with them, and viewed their responses to external and internal influences (e.g., district mandates, parent requests, personal concerns, challenging students), we were struck by other qualitative differences among them. Teachers differed in terms of the degree to which they accepted, relied on, or actively sought out different sources of ideas in the development of their practice. These "ideas" were used by the teachers to construct a knowledge base for their beliefs and practices. We began to see patterns among teachers that were consistent in terms of their influence on orientation toward teaching and students. What emerged over time was a distinct voice for each teacher, a voice not entirely described by the basal use continuum presented earlier.

Beyond her relationship with the basal and other instructional materials, each teacher's voice seemed to reflect basic ideological views (Bakhtin, 1993) as well as a more general approach to knowledge, learning, and authority.

Drawing upon the concept of different "ways of knowing" (Bruner, 1986; Eisner, 1985), we sought to describe each teacher in terms of the ways of knowing exhibited during our observations and interactions with her. In pursuit of a framework to examine this dimension, we drew on the work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986). These researchers argue that ". . .our basic assessments about the nature of truth and reality and the origins of knowledge shape the way we see the world and ourselves as participants in it" (p. 3). Through their research, they attempted to identify the ways in which individuals (women in particular) "know" the world they live in. Based on extensive interviews and assessments conducted with 135 women from various roles and occupations, they have described a framework that offers an alternative to the developmental models proposed by researchers like Kohlberg (1984) and Perry (1981).

Belenky et al. (1986) identified five ways of knowing exhibited in their study: Silent, Received, Subjective, Procedural (further broken down into Separate and Connected knowers), and Constructed. Brief descriptors associated with each of these types drawn from the Belenky et al. study are presented in the Appendix. While Belenky et al. are reluctant to identify any of these types as inherently better than any of the others, they do suggest that some types of knowing are more adaptive for the individual than others (organized from the least adaptive at the top of the listing in the Appendix to the most adaptive at the bottom). Adaptive here is used in the sense of enabling the individual to respond successfully to changes in the environment.

Belenky et al. (1986) also shy away from any claims regarding the developmental or stage aspects of these ways of knowing. Because their data base is static, they have no strong basis for inferring a stage-type progression, although their retrospective interviews point toward certain patterns of change as well as conditions that may be associated with movement from one type of knowing to another.

Using the Belenky framework, we examined our data base from year one interviews and classroom observations to classify the case-study teachers into the type of knowing that appeared most dominant for each of them. Extensive descriptors for each of the ways of knowing derived from the Belenky et al. (1986) report (see Appendix) were used as the primary basis for the classification. We examined the transcripts from interviews and observations for each case-study teacher and discussed the various options until a consensus was reached regarding a classification by the entire research team following the procedures used by Belenky et al. in their own research. In classifying these teachers using this system, we do not suggest that these assignments represent them in all contexts as "knowers," rather that, in the context of teaching that we examined, they appeared to fall into these particular classifications. (The issue of context and its effects on ways of knowing is an area that even Belenky acknowledges is in need of investiga-

tion.) Following several cycles of data review and discussion, we were able to achieve consensus in classifying all of the case-study teachers in the sample. We found the distribution of the case-study teachers using the Belenky et al. scheme to be: Silent (N = 1), Received (N = 6), Subjective (N = 1), Procedural-Separate (N = 3), Procedural-Connected (N = 4), Constructed (N = 1). For purposes of illustration, we offer brief descriptions of one teacher from each of the categories.

Silent. Mary was the only one of the 16 case-study teachers classified as "silent." In her 11th year of teaching, Mary had 3 years of teaching experience at the high school level in another state before moving to District #3. This was her 2nd year of teaching at the first-grade level. She viewed the world as full of innuendo, and people with authority were generally perceived as "out to get her." She expressed little confidence in her ability to learn from others, nor did she see herself as part of the teaching community. In fact, she viewed herself in isolation from the others and described her relationship with her colleagues as one of "them versus me." For example, she could not understand how the other teachers in her school could afford things that she could not, "Look out there. Did you notice I have the oldest car in the parking lot?" Mary reserved a positive view for the children in her class only when they were submitting unquestionably to her authority, as exemplified by her statement, "The students who are the best readers are the ones that are the quietest." She expected students to come to school already versed in the necessary skills of obedience, and decried the fact that most of the students in her class did not exhibit this kind of control. She took no ownership or responsibility for the fact that student behavior in her classroom was "out of control. . .nerve-racking. . .undisciplined." She perceived herself as powerless in the face of the administration—they made all the decisions, and she submitted regardless of whether she understood or agreed. She reported that she "can only work with what she's given." She wanted to leave teaching, but was unwilling to take the risk. It was "all she knows." Mary did not exhibit any behaviors which would indicate self-reflection or awareness. She resented what others had accomplished, envied their possessions, but did not show awareness of what others had done to earn the items they value.

Received. Nona was a teacher in District #1. As a "received knower," her orientation toward reading and authority can be summarized by her statement, "Phonics needs to be taught by every teacher up until 5th or 6th grade, and it needs to be mandated. Then children can break everything down, even if their comprehension is not good." She had particular beliefs about how reading ought to be taught, not only by herself but by all teachers. She looked to outside authority, such as a state mandate, to dictate appropriate instruction. She began her teaching with basals, using supplemental skills materials that were developed by a professor and his graduate student. She has used these same materials ever since. When she decided to try something new, a Reader's Theater, she commented that she had gotten the idea from a friend and was going to try to implement it in the same way. Discipline was very important to her, "There is so much crime and chaos in the world because

there is no discipline or respect. If people would work harder, there would be no crime." She believed she must teach students to do things right or the world would not be a good place for her daughter.

Subjective. Pat was certified as an elementary bilingual teacher. She taught a first-grade class that consisted both of monolingual-Spanish speaking and bilingual children. She had 13 years' teaching experience at the elementary level, with the last 5 years in her current school in District #3. Pat expressed confidence in her approach to reading instruction. She stated that her past experiences as a student and as a teacher contributed to the strength of her convictions, she uses ". . . what (she) has found that works with students." Pat was a strong advocate of a phonics approach to beginning reading instruction, as was manifest in her statement, "If they don't know the sounds that the alphabet gives, then how can they pronounce a word. First you go with learn to read and write the alphabet, then you go into the alphabet sounds. . . . We start with voice cards, how the students are actually supposed to form their mouths and lips to form letters." Reading with the basals did not begin until the students had learned all of the foundation skills. Pat did not collaborate with other teachers in planning for instruction nor did she seek affirmation for her practices from others. The affirmation came from reports that her kids were "doing well" in subsequent classes and, in particular, on tests. She described almost all of her practices as rooted in her personal teaching experiences. She believed that all students can learn, but also believed that there were outside forces that prevented her from meeting the needs of all students. Her classroom management style was highly autocratic. She did not tolerate inappropriate behaviors, and the general noise level of the classroom reflected a "silenced" learning context. Pat was the only first-grade teacher in our case study sample classified as a "subjective knower."

Procedural-separate. Sarah had been teaching first grade for 22 years; she currently teaches in District #4. She described her program as very structured: "I follow the basal. . . almost entirely for reading instruction." The students in her class were grouped by ability for reading instruction. Sarah's comment "Sometimes I think they ask us to do too much" suggests, at the surface level, that she was a "received knower," but, in fact, her patterns of thinking and teaching were more complex. She discounted state or district policies: "They change . . . but there are ways to work around them." The traditional basal approach fit into her philosophy: "I like the spiraling effect, building on skills, and the sequential order of skills." She believed there was enough room for her to adapt instruction to her setting: "It's not *that* structured where I can't take it and make it my own." Her philosophy was one of order: "To me. . . there's an order in which you go in and you need to follow that, in order to build up a good foundation. I think a lot of it is review and repetition." The patterns of teaching in her classroom reflected this philosophy. There was a regular pattern for instruction—it was sequential and direct. The bottom line for her was that "it works."

Procedural-connected. Connie received her BA degree in education in 1975. However, she

did not begin teaching until just 5 years ago (in the interim she gave birth to and raised three sons). She returned to teaching initially as a substitute teacher in her current school placement (District #1) and was eventually hired as a full-time teacher. Connie's pragmatic attitude toward texts and materials places her firmly within the category of a "procedural-connected knower." She took a distanced view toward texts and materials, and used them as necessary. In her relations with administrators and teachers who did not subscribe to the whole language philosophy (i.e., teachers in the upper grades), she attempted to maintain good relations and "play the game," but not without expressing and maintaining her own opinions. She worked closely with other primary teachers, and relied on their consensual agreement to validate her own practices. Connie viewed standardized testing with disapproval and refused to let it control her practice; but at the same time, she was cognizant of its authority over her students and took seriously the need to prepare students to cope with the text. In her relations with students, she continually viewed and responded to student remarks and behavior emphatically, and frequently went along with activities suggested by students that were relevant to the task at hand.

Constructed. Pam taught in District #1. She had been teaching first grade in the same district for 7 years. "I have a real interest in teaching reading," she stated. "I was never a basal teacher. I couldn't stand reading another story about Mr. Fig. I thought I was ready to strangle those characters. So then we designed a program. We did research and read professional books and saw what was going on. . . what we did come up with really rejuvenated me." One of her frustrations with teaching was the number of times students were being pulled out for special programs at all times during the day. This, combined with the class as a group going to "specials" at odd times during the day, offered a fragmented teaching/learning context. Pam took the initiative to meet with her principal and arrange a teaching schedule that consisted of a solid, 3-hour language arts block daily. No students were pulled out during this time. She used only trade books in her classroom that fit in with her thematic orientation. She used shared reading and a tremendous amount of interrelated language arts activities. Pam took a leadership role in the evolution of the program in her own classroom and across the entire first-grade team. She was well connected to the other teachers, but she was constantly breaking new ground based on her outside reading or on her personal study of effective practices in her classroom.

While we classified all of our teachers in one or another of the categories, in some cases we judged teachers to be in a state of transition. That is, some teachers showed evidence of moving toward or just coming from another dominant mode. Using the Belenky classification system, we have reconfigured the teachers on the basal continuum to add another dimension (Figure 3).

In this figure, we have located the teachers both in terms of their dominant "way of knowing" as well as in terms of their basal affiliation. This two-dimensional display better represents the differences and similarities among the case-study teachers than the unidimensional scale presented earlier. We find an

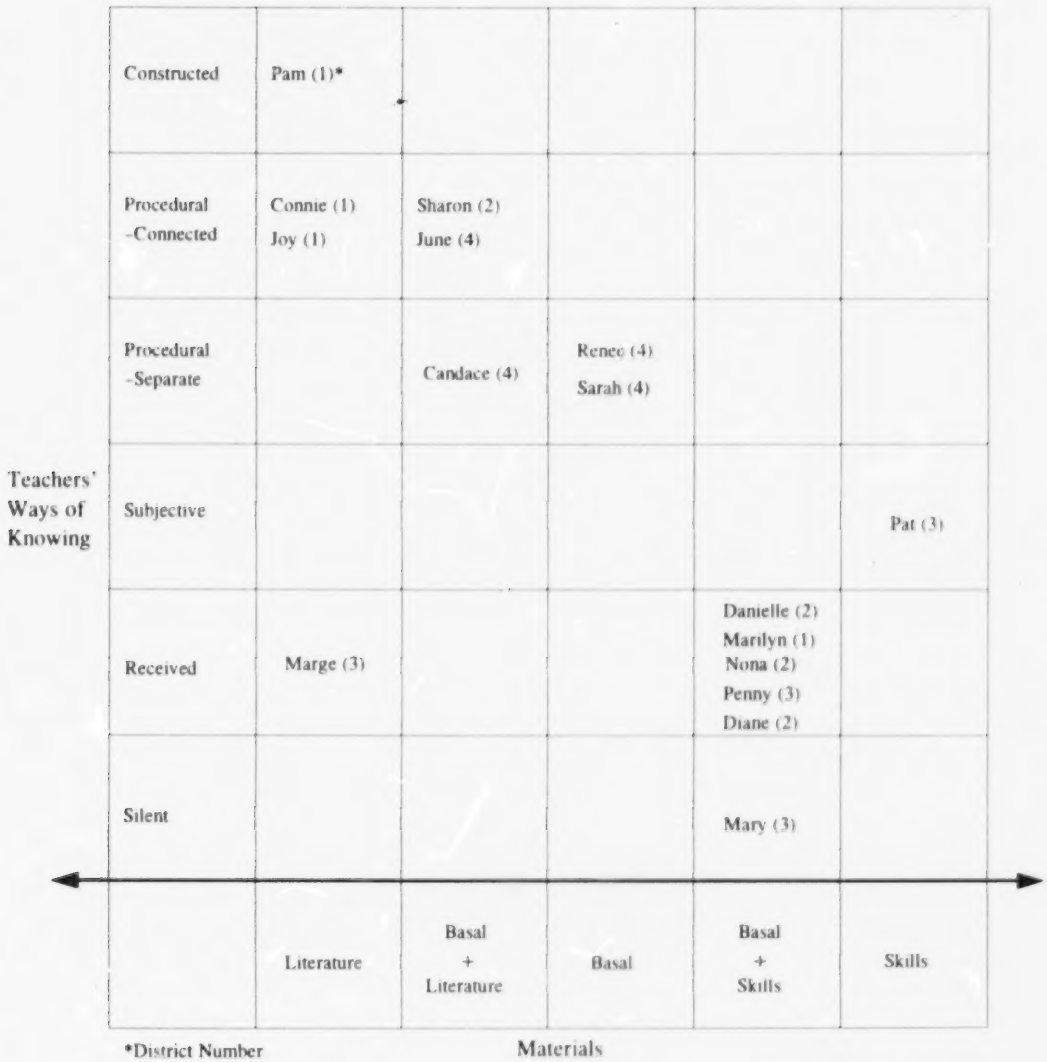

Figure 3. Combined Frameworks Based on "Ways of Knowing" and Materials Use

obvious pattern revealed in this figure relating the basal affiliation and the dominant mode of knowing. Those teachers who are classified as Procedural and Constructed tend toward the literature-based side of the basal continuum. Those teachers who are more received, subjec-

tive, or silent in their dominant mode of knowing tend more toward the right side of the basal continuum. This pattern is not surprising given the fact that access to the strategies and ideas associated with literature-based instruction (at least in the districts we were working with in our sample) are relatively new to the field and are mediated primarily through collegial interactions and/or individual initiative (e.g., self-study, experimentation). The voice of authority and experience that informs the received and the subjective tends toward reinforcing the status quo. The overall pattern of relationship supports the idea that certain forms of knowing permit greater adaptation in response to changes in the surrounding context.

Beyond the overall pattern, however, there are some interesting relationships revealed at the level of the individual teacher. For example, on the left side of the basal scale (i.e., toward literature based) we find teachers, like Connie, whom we classified as a "procedural-connected knower," and Joy, whom we classified as a "received knower." Connie was a teacher who used the basal for the first several years of teaching and then abandoned it as she began to explore the use of trade books as the principal basis for teaching reading. She worked with several first-grade colleagues over a number of years in developing materials and procedures for teaching using trade books. In contrast, Joy had never used the basal at all. She relied on information received in workshops and "teacher guides" from trade-book publishers to guide her practices. Her interviews revealed a greater concern for "doing it the right way" than in adapting to student responses or connecting with other teachers attempting similar approaches.

The two teachers who were classified earlier as "by the basal teachers" (at the center on the continuum) also are interesting for their differences. We classified these teachers (Sarah and Renee) as "procedural-separate knowers." Our sense (informed by their comments) is that the appeal of basals is not so much a following as it is a match with an ideology. These two teachers saw teaching and learning in terms of the organized transfer of information/skills to students. They saw basals as offering organization, a sequential path for teaching and learning, resources, etc. that were useful in doing what they believed needed to occur for student learning to take place.

Discussion

The first-grade classrooms we studied offer great diversity in teaching and learning experiences in the area of reading. We observed little of the kind of homogeneity one would expect to find if teachers were blindly following the traditional basal programs currently adopted in their districts as a script or a recipe for instructional practice. The influence of the basal, while certainly significant, is not totally controlling in its effects on the teachers we studied. The responses on the survey questionnaire suggest that this diversity in instructional practices is not limited to our small, case-study sample, but is representative of the broader set of first-grade teachers in these districts. Our broader data set challenges Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas (1993) who suggest that their 8 teachers relied heavily on the basal, while supporting the work of Sosniak and Stodolsky (1993) who found that teachers were more autonomous in their

use of textbook materials than previously suggested.

This greater autonomy in our study might be explained by distinguishing between the use of the teachers' manuals and the use of the pupil texts. While most of our teachers used the pupil texts in their instruction, only two followed the teachers' manuals in a procedural-ized way. Instead, they drew from the manuals only as needed and designed flexible routines around the pupil texts or other materials. Our data, then, challenge Shannon's (1983) hypothesis that the basals are "deskilling" teachers. Adopting Shannon's viewpoint, we would expect to find a preponderance of teachers as "received knowers," doing by-the-book basal instruction. In fact, we could not characterize any of the 16 case-study teachers in these terms. However, this is not to say that many of the teachers were actively resisting basal use since only 4 were clear literature users rather than basal users. Indeed, 7 of our teachers seemed to be driven by skills instruction as much as or more than they were driven by the basal. Our continuum provides more distinctions among literature use, basal use, and skill use than other models that have simply viewed basals as deskilling teachers. Rather than blaming the basal for inadequate instruction, we hope to provide more informative and complex models of explanation for teachers' reading practices.

An analysis of teachers' ways of *knowing* offers a more promising perspective for understanding teachers' beliefs and practices. The teachers we identified as silenced, subjective, or received knowers are markedly different in the way they are growing as teachers than those identified as procedural or constructed knowers. In Belenky et al.'s (1986) terms, those identified as silenced, subjective, or received knowers were less adaptive to the context in which they were working. We found their responses varying from contentment with their program and not changing (the subjective knower) to willingness to follow whatever direction they were given to change without reflection or question (the received knowers), to a total state of confusion (the silenced knower). The procedural-separate knowers were systematic, considerate, and planful in their approaches to teaching. They demonstrated a willingness to adapt to new demands in the teaching context (either in response to the demands of challenging students or initiatives from the administration), but they approached such changes with caution and even skepticism. The procedural-connected knowers welcomed change. They exhibited confidence in their own intuitions and actively approached their colleagues to try out new ideas or seek affirmation for what they were doing. The constructed knower (one teacher in our sample) was a risk-taker who was willing to go off on her own in entirely new directions. She responded to her experience, to her intuitions, to her students, and to the insights she gained from her professional reading.

Although we have characterized teachers' reading practices along the dimensions described by Belenky et al. (1986), we do not intend for these categories to be considered static nor applicable across contexts. Instead, we see these categorizations as subject to change as teachers develop and are influenced by context-specific factors. Additionally, a teacher who

seems to be a "received knower" within the context of reading instruction may present differently in another subject area or at another time.

The notion of "ways of knowing" offers a heuristic for considering the teachers' beliefs and practices. We emphasize here the notion of "ways of knowing" as a heuristic because, at this point in time, it cannot be regarded as a theory or even a stage model. We do not envision "tests" to categorize teachers. We do not envision intervention programs designed to move teachers "up" the knowing scale. We are not even convinced that there is an "up" on the scale . . . only differences. We do not believe that "women's ways of knowing" are inherently different from men's. (Like Belenky, we can only account for those represented in our sample—all female.) At best, "ways of knowing" offers us a fresh perspective for examining some old problems. It is in the students' interest and it is in the interest of the profession for teachers to be adaptive to the context in which they work. This ability to adapt is the key to continuing professional growth.

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APPENDIX

"Ways of Knowing" Category Summary (Based on Belenky et al., 1986)

Silent

Experiences the self as voiceless and without the capacity to receive or generate knowledge, blindly obedient to authority, powerless, dependent: words are weapons.

"I deserved to be hit."
"The baby listens to him. But me, I can't do anything with him."
"At home people talk about you. People know your business and everything else. . . . Lots of rumors are always going around."

Received

Sees knowledge as absolute and always in the possession of authorities. Listens to others in order to learn.

"The women . . . know so much and I know nothing. I like to sit back and just listen to what they have to say."
"My aunt is special. I could tell her what I could tell nobody else . . . . We're alike. We think the same things."

Subjective

Distrusts authority and understands knowledge as personal and originating within one's self. Locked in own world view, develops own personal, private voice.

"This time it dawned on me that I wasn't going to get the answers from anybody. I would have to find them myself."
"I just listen to the inside of me and I know what to do."
"It's like a certain feeling that you have inside you. It's hard to explain."

Procedural

Perceives knowledge as objective and rationally derived, although subject to multiple perspectives, acquires the voice of reason.

1. **Separate**
   Doubts, follows objective positivism, tries to "prove a point."
   ". . . you substantiate what you're saying. They're teaching you a method, and you're applying it for yourself."

2. **Connected**
   Believes, comfortable with experiential logic of phenomenology.
   Appreciates relationships among things/people, goal is to understand something: learns through empathy, refuses to judge.
   "I went through the same experience. I did the same thing."
   "I'd try to recreate that person's reasoning. . . ."

Constructed

Understands knowledge as constructed, acknowledges and takes responsibility for shaping knowledge, is a "passionate knower." Active creator of knowledge—values both internal and external cues. Integrates the many voices.

"We're simplifying everything so that we can work with it, but the thing is really more complex."
"Your question is out of context!"—"You're asking the wrong question!"
"It's much more interesting once one discipline starts to interconnect with others."

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